

Volunteer Spotlight: Sammons Financial Group

Even through an unparalleled year like 2020, see how Sammons Financial Group incorporated volunteerism into their business model.



When it came to volunteering in 2020, organizations and companies had to prioritize the safety of their employees while continuing to serve our community during a time of intense need. Sammons Financial Group kept volunteerism and the importance of giving back at the forefront of their business, offering creative and innovative opportunities including school supply drives, donation collections, lunch & learns, and a variety of virtual site tours – all while adhering to necessary safety precautions.

As a company with both a passion and strong history of volunteering, Sammons Financial knew they would need to be creative to provide volunteer opportunities in 2020. In the past, they typically participated in traditional programs through United Way of Central Iowa like Day of Action and Backpack Heroes. This year, they modified these to offer safe alternatives for employees, starting by holding a school supply drive in lieu of the traditional Backpack Heroes. They received a list of items in need from Des Moines Public Schools, created an online shopping list, and then sent the link out to employees. Employees purchased items off the list, which were then sent to the Sammons Financial Group headquarters and delivered to Des Moines Public Schools for distribution of 606 items, in total. This was a perfect example of pivoting traditional volunteer drives to create a safe and unique community impact event.

The positive feedback from this event led to a winter clothing drive and a Virtual Food Drive for DMARC Food Pantry. The winter clothing drive was also run online and was delivered to three funded partners for distribution in the community. In total, they donated \$360, 80 coats, and 305 additional items. The food drive was set up as a virtual campaign site to collect donations, which raised \$1,710. The volunteers enjoyed this event as it was quite easy to send items right where they needed to go. As a bonus, this

event reminded our community that we are all in this together, and we can do meaningful things with what we have to make a positive difference.

The donation drives inspired a flurry of volunteer and community impact events throughout the year at Sammons Financial Group. They hosted lunch & learns, participated in a hunger simulation, held virtual scavenger hunts, and took tours of various funded partner organizations. These educational opportunities gave volunteers a better look at the reality of many individuals in our community, once again, renewing their sense of community, engagement, and purpose.

Volunteering has the power to raise morale, create a sense of purpose, and of course, create positive, lasting change in our community. United Way of Central Iowa can help organize impactful events that best align with the initiatives and goals of your organization, company, or group. If you are interested in hosting your own volunteer event with United Way of Central Iowa, contact Anna Schaber, Volunteer Engagement Specialist, at anna.schaber@unitedwaydm.org